DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

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TEN YEARS AGO

Ten years ago the British Parliament sent an official delegation to visit Buchenwald Concentration Camp a few days after it had been liberated, and published its report as a White Paper. Today, when certain politicians are aiming to give guns again to the nazi generals and concentration camp guards, this report is necessary reading. It is reprinted here.

1. On 19th April, 1945, in the course of a statement in the House of Commons on the German concentration camps, the Prime Minister said:—

"I have this morning received an informal message from General Eisenhower saying that the new discoveries, particularly at Weimar, far surpass anything previously exposed. He invites me to send a body of Members of Parliament at once to his Headquarters in order that they may themselves have ocular and first-hand proof of these atrocities. The matter is of urgency. . . . I have come to the conclusion that eight Members of this House and two Members of the House of Lords should form a Parliamentary Delegation, and should travel out at once to the Supreme Headquarters. . . . Photographs will be shown of the Members in these gruesome scenes. . . . The object of this visit is to find out the truth. . . ." (Official Report, Cols. 300-391.)

Many Members of both Houses at once volunteered to serve on this delegation. The Leader of the House of Lords and the Speaker selected four Members of the Conservative Party, three Members of the Labour Party, one Liberal, one Liberal National, and one Independent.

2. Our terms of reference were clearly not those of a judicial commission of enquiry or to investigate Nazi atrocities generally. Such a process might have taken many weeks or even months, and would have required a staff of official clerks and interpreters. Our object was "to find out the truth," while the evidence was still fresh, at this important camp—the first of the main concentration camps of Nazi Germany to be overrun by British or American forces—

BUCHENWALD CAMP

The Report of a Parliamentary Delegation

Presented by the Prime Minister, First Lord of the Treasury and Minister of Defence, to Parliament by Command of His Majesty April 1945

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and so to test the accuracy of the reports already published. We therefore determined to exclude from our report statements of which no material evidence was still visible. It may be noted that our delegation included one woman, two doctors of medicine, and one solicitor, a member of the Jewish race; and that, while at least two of our number understood German sufficiently well to be able to converse in it fluently with internees, there was in fact no difficulty of communication, since among the men from almost every European nation present in the camp there were many who spoke English. Though our visit was brief, the time originally scheduled for it was extended by several hours, and we had ample opportunity of accumulating data. A number of photographs were taken in our presence, and these are available for publication.

3. We left London by air on the afternoon of Friday, April 20th . . . We proceeded by air to Weimar on the following morning, arriving at Buchenwald Camp at about 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 21st.

4. Buchenwald Camp is set in hilly, well-wooded country about 15 minutes' drive from Weimar. It dates from 1934 . . . The ordinary huts of the camp are roughly constructed of wood, with earth floors, without windows or sanitation. (Latrines consist of poles suspended over trenches.) There are also some more solidly built brick blocks, of two storeys. Over the main gate of the camp is the inscription *„Recht oder unrecht — mein Vaterland."*

(My country right or wrong).

5. The size of the camp is indicated by the fact that its maximum capacity was said to have been 120,000. On 1st April last the number

in camp was 80,813. A few days before the arrival of the American forces (11th April), the Nazis removed a large number of prisoners, variously estimated at from 18,000 to 22,000. Some of those whom they wished to remove (because "they knew too much") were able to hide from them. It was impossible to form any accurate estimate of the percentages of various nationalities still remaining in the camp; we met many Jews and non-Jewish Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, French, Belgians, Russians and others. A detailed report presented to us by representatives of an anti-Fascist committee stated that, up to 1st April, the total number of those who had died or been killed at Buchenwald, or immediately on removal therefrom to subsidiary "extermination-camps", was 51,572—at least 17,000 of them since 1st January, 1945. The camp has now been thrown open, and a certain number of its inmates must have left independently. Detailed camp records, including nominal rolls, were left behind by the Nazis; but, at the time of our visit, it had not been possible to start drawing up rolls of those still in the camp, the American medical and sanitary authorities being naturally preoccupied with the cleaning of the camp (a task performed partly by German civilians from the neighbourhood, parties of whom are also brought daily to see what had been done in their name and in their midst), and with problems of feeding and medical attention.

No P. WO. s.

6. Although the inmates of the camp are commonly referred to as "prisoners", they should not be confused with military Prisoners of War. They were in three main categories: (a) political internees and Jews from Germany itself; (b) as the Third Reich expanded, political internees and Jews from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, etc.; (c) from 1940 onwards, men and youths imported for forced labour from the various occupied countries. There were few Britons at any time in the camp; one estimate was "a few dozen". Almost all of these were civilians. We were told of one French parachutist, Lieutenant Maurice Pertschuk, who was taken prisoner in 1943, transferred in civilian clothes from Compiègne to Buchenwald, and there hanged, shortly before the United States troops arrived. We also obtained a document, signed by Squadron-Leader F. Yeo-Thomas, Captain Harry Poole, and Lieut. Stephane Hessel (of the French War Ministry), testifying to the fact that they were saved from execution "by amazingly clever planning, under perilous circumstances", by Heinz Baumeister of Dortmund and Dr. Eugen Kogon of Vienna, who are still inmates of the camp.

Squalor

7. Although the work of cleaning the camp had gone on busily for over a week before our visit, and conditions must therefore have been improved considerably, our immediate and continuing impression was of intense general squalor; the odour of dissolution and disease still pervaded the entire place. One of the first of a number of huts that we entered was one of the best: it was divided into small rooms with cement floor and windows, four of which had been used, the American authorities informed us, as a brothel to which the higher-grade prisoners—those employed in various supervisory jobs, with extra rations and other privileges—were allowed to resort for twenty minutes at a time. (In general, Buchenwald Camp was for men and boys only; the women in this brothel were prisoners from other camps, induced by threats and promises of better treatment, to become prostitutes, but subsequently killed. When the Americans arrived, fifteen women were found in this brothel. (They were transferred to the care of the Burgomaster of Weimar.) This hut was one of those now used as transit hospitals for some of the worst cases of malnutrition. Many were unable to speak: they lay in a semi-coma, or following us with their eyes. Others spoke freely, displaying sores and severe scars and bruises which could have been caused by kicks and blows. They lay on the floor on and under quilts. All of them were in a state of extreme emaciation. We were told by the U.S. authorities that, since their arrival, the number of deaths had been reduced from about a hundred per day to 35 on the day before our visit. The usual clothing was a ragged shirt, vest or cotton jacket, beneath which protruded thighs no thicker than normal wrists. One half-naked skeleton, tottering painfully along the passage as though on stilts, drew himself up when he saw our party, smiled, and saluted. The medical members of our Delegation expressed the opinion that a percentage of them could not be expected to survive, even with the treatment they were now receiving, and that a larger percentage, though they might survive, would probably suffer sickness and disablement for the rest of their lives. Among those in this hut were several writers and students, and one member of the French Deuxième Bureau captured in Warsaw.

8. The ordinary huts that we saw were lined on each side with four tiers of wooden shelves, supported and divided by upright struts. In each of the small open cubicles thus formed, about six feet in depth, four feet in width, and two feet in height, five or six men had to sleep. Even in their wasted condition, there was room for them to lie in one position only, on their sides. Several of them demonstrated to us how this had been done. For bedclothes they had such rags as they could collect. Heaps of these rags were being burned in various parts of the camp; the huts were still verminous.

"Hospital"

9. There had been similar overcrowding in Block 61, which had been used as a rough hospital, chiefly for those suffering from tuberculosis or dysentery. This hut was about 80 ft. long by 24 ft. wide; estimates of its normal sick population varied from 700 to 1,300. Four, five, or six men, including those who had undergone operations (performed without anaesthetics by prisoner doctors on a crude operating-table at one end of the hut, in full view of the other patients), had regularly to lie in each of the small shelf cubicles. Here, too, there were no mattresses. The excreta of the dysentery patients dripped down from tier to tier. If the living were strong enough, they pushed the dead out into the gangway. Each night the dead were thrown into a small annexe at one end of the hut, and each morning collected and taken in carts to the crematorium or, if required as specimens, to the pathological laboratory of the Nazi doctors.

10. Many of the ordinary prisoners worked in a large munition factory near the camp or in the quarries; these were able to obtain more than the basic ration of a bowl of watery soup and a chunk of dry bread each day . . .

Children, like adults, were made to work eight or more hours a day, seven days a week. We were told that there were some 800 children still in the camp. One 14-year-old boy, Abraham Kirchenblat, originally of Radom, Poland, impressed members of our party as an intelligent and reliable witness; he stated that he had seen his 18-year-old brother shot dead and his parents taken away, he believed for cremation: he never saw them again.

11. The mortuary block consisted of two floors, ground floor and basement. Access to the basement was by a steep stone staircase or by a vertical chute below a trap-door, down either of which, we were told, refractory or useless prisoners would be precipitated for execution. Hanging appears to have been the regular method of killing. In the yard, near a pile of white ashes, there was a gibbet; in the basement we saw strong hooks, at a height of about 8 ft. from the floor, and another gibbet. We were informed that there had been more than forty hooks, most of which Nazis had removed hurriedly before leaving. We were shown a heavy wooden club, about 2 ft. long, which was said to have been used for knocking out any who died slowly; it was stained with blood. The bodies were transported from this basement to the ground-floor crematorium in a large electric lift (similar to those used for stretcher-cases in hospitals). To the yard outside the crematorium came the carts, packed closely with the ordinary corpses from the dysentery and other huts, mostly stripped even of the meagre striped blue-and-white suits which were the normal camp clothing. We examined the last of these cart-loads that remained, awaiting the reverent individual burial which, on General Eisenhower's personal order, the American authorities have obliged the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to provide with their own hands. The bodies were beginning to decompose, but none that we could see bore the marks of violent death; all appeared, from their state of extreme emaciation, to have died of hunger or of disease. In the crematorium was a row of capacious arched ovens, each still containing calcined ribs, skulls, and spinal columns . . .

12. We were told of scientific experiments, such as the infecting of prisoners with typhus in order to obtain serum from them, by the camp's Nazi doctors; but obtained no direct and unchallengeable evidence of this. We saw a laboratory with a large number of glass jars containing preserved specimens of human organs. The walls of the laboratory and other medical rooms were decorated with death-masks of, we were told, the "more interesting" prisoners—many with features of remarkable nobility and refinement. It was alleged that various experiments in sterilisation had been practised on Jews. Two of our number were taken to the bed (in the improvised American hospital) of a Polish Jew, Number 23397, aged 29, who had been operated on in this way; they saw the scars of the operation, and confirm that the left testicle had been removed. Other subjects of the operation were said to have died; and we were assured that the policy of exterminating Jews had long superseded that of castrating them. We were told that Frau Koch, the wife of the German Commandant, collected articles made of human skin. We obtained pieces of hide which have since been identified by Sir Bernard Spilsbury as being human skin. One of these pieces clearly formed part of a lampshade.

13. One of the statements made to us most frequently by prisoners was that conditions in other camps, particulary those in Eastern Europe, were far worse than at Buchenwald. The worst camp of all was said by many to be at Auschwitz; these men all insisted on showing us their Auschwitz camp numbers, tattooed in blue on their left forearms. One 19-year-old youth, Joseph Berman, Latvian-born but English-educated, had been in several camps; in one, he had suffered the loss of a forefinger when a Nazi, annoyed by his indolence at work, had pushed his hand into a machine.

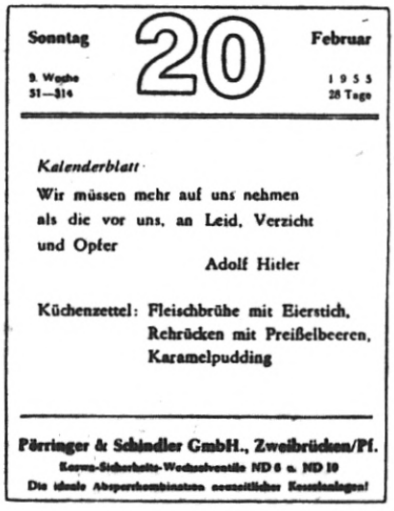
14. Despite the desperate physical condition of many of the prisoners, and their long years of incarceration, there were signs of mental as well as physical recovery. Vivid slogans of greeting to the liberating Armies, in English and many other languages, were being painted on the outside of the huts. New notice-boards bore news-sheets and well-designed instructional and democratic propaganda messages, mostly in German. Near the entrance to the camp was a life-size effigy of Hitler hanging from a gibbet, with the superscription in German:—"Hitler must die that Germany may live!"

It would be impossible to praise too highly the selfless exertions of the 120th Evacuation Hospital Unit, under the command of Colonel William E. Williams (in charge of medical services), assisted by Major L. C. Schmuhl (in charge of sanitary services). We saw blood transfusion in process, and learned that glucose injections were being given and that carefully chosen diets were supplied to prisoners incapable of digesting normal food.

15. In preparing this report, we have endeavoured to write with restraint and objectivity, and to avoid obtruding personal reactions or emotional comments. We would conclude, however, by stating that it is our considered and unanimous opinion, on the evidence available to us, that a policy of steady starvation and inhuman brutality was carried out at Buchenwald for a long period of time; and that such camps as this mark the lowest point of degradation to which humanity has yet descended. The memory of what we saw and heard at Buchenwald will haunt us ineffaceably for many years.

Lord Stanhope
Lord Addison
Tom Wickham (Conservative)
Archibald R. J. Southby (Conservative)
Mavis Tate (Conservative)
Ness Edwards (Labour)
S. Sydney Silvermann (Labour)
Graham White (Liberal)
Henry Morris-Jones (Liberal-National)
Tom Driberg (Labour)

Heil Hitler — 1955



This is one page from a tear-off calender for 1955, distributed free to customers by the engineering firm of Poerringer and Schindler, Zweibruecken, West Germany.

The "motto for the day" on February 20th 1955 is:

"We must take more on our shoulders than those who came before us, more suffering, renunciation and sacrifice.

Adolf Hitler"

The quotation is followed by the recipe for the day — soup, venison and caramel pudding.

WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?

By Walter Ulbricht, Deputy Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic

Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht, speaking at Leipzig on March 5th to the 2nd All-German Workers' Conference, attended by hundreds of Social-Democrats, Communists and trade unionists from all parts of Germany, outlined the next steps in policy following West German ratification of the Paris Agreements. Here are some of the main points which he made:

It is clear that every member of the West German Parliament who voted in favour of the Paris Agreements has committed a crime similar to that committed by the members of the first Hitler Reichstag who (in March 1933) voted plenary powers to the Hitler Government.

The deputies in the West German Parliament must realise that they will not get away with this crime so lightly as did those who voted Hitler into power.

The German working class has opened its fight against the national treachery of the regime in Bonn. For the first time since 1945 the working class in West Germany has placed itself in the vanguard of the national struggle. The plebiscites and strikes in Bavaria, the Ruhr and other areas show that the working class is coming to see the national responsibility which it bears.

In the past, the national fate of Germany was left in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Now that the bourgeoisie have committed national treason it is up to the working class to take up the banner of national unity and national independence.

What has to be done, now that the majority in the West German Parliament has ratified the Paris Agreements?

A number of speakers at this conference have already indicated the answer: An all-German plebiscite must be held. (For details of the plebiscite proposed by the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic, see opposite page.)

The People's Chamber has addressed itself to the German people, calling upon them to come together without regard for their political opinions, to protest against the Paris Agreements.

How can Germany be reunified if the Germans themselves do not reach agreement, and make their own contribution to ensuring peace and the unity of their homeland?

In order to hold a Four Power Conference on Germany, it is necessary for a people's movement to get under way in Germany for the annulment of the Paris Agreements. In order to launch such a mighty people's movement it is necessary to establish united action on the part of the working class, and the cooperation of all Germans who want reunification.

The Government in Bonn wants a lasting partitioning of Germany, and for this reason it is opposed to negotiations with the German Democratic Republic. It is thus necessary for the democratic forces in West Germany to get together, and that the Social Democratic Party, the West German Trade Union Federation, and other organisations with a mass following, should open direct negotiations with the Government of the German Democratic Republic and the relevant organisations in the German Democratic Republic . . .

The American High Commissioner in Germany, Mr Conant, has declared that following the ratification of the Paris Agreements the zonal frontier (between East and West Germany, ed.) will be closed. This shows that Mr Conant would like the zonal frontier to be closed, so that West Germany can be better converted into a war deployment area. The aim of such a closing would be to prevent the ideas of freedom, democracy and progress from spreading to West Germany.

But the progressive forces in Germany have quite a different policy: they want a continuation of the policy of free discussion between Germans.

Now is the time for the exchange of workers' delegations, peasant delegations, cultural delegations, and so on, so that the people of the two parts of Germany can come nearer to each other.

We are opposed to any closing of the zonal frontier.

COMMUNIST BAN TRIAL STILL RUNNING

Here is a summary of the proceedings before the West German Constitutional Court at Karlsruhe, at which the West German Government is attempting to obtain a ban on the Communist Party (KPD). Summaries of the previous proceedings were given in GERMAN REPORT dated December 10th and 24th 1954, and March 4th 1955.

March 1st: Government Attorney Dr. Dix read to the court for 90 minutes single sentences and paragraphs from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, in the attempt to prove that the KPD is unconstitutional in West Germany.

Defence Attorney Dr. Kroeger submitted that such sentences, torn from their context, were irrelevant to the present trial. "These quotations do nothing to prove that the KPD has the aim of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat at this time in West Germany" he stated. "The real reason why the West German Government is attempting to ban the KPD is because the KPD is the sharpest opponent of the policy of remilitarisation."

March 2nd: Walter Fisch, member of the Central Board of the KPD, submitted that the history of the past twenty years had shown that the KPD had led a clear and unwavering fight against fascist dictatorship, against all encroachments on the democratic rights of the people, and for the creation of a real democracy in Germany. The history of the KPD had shown that even under the very difficult conditions of the Hitlerite dictatorship the party had fought for human rights and liberty, and had suffered very severely in the course of this struggle.

"It is not the KPD which endangers democracy in West Germany, as Chancellor Adenauer claims" Walter Fisch stated. "The real danger is represented by the Paris Agreements and the resultant remilitarisation."

At this point the court instructed Walter Fisch to terminate his speech, on the application of the Government Attorney.

March 3rd: Defence Attorney Wessig applied to the court for protection against police interference in freedom of action of the defence, and particularly against police measures against members of the public attending the trial. Police at the entrance to the court were taking the names and addresses of all persons attending the trial, and many such persons had been called to the police stations in their home towns and cross-examined on their reasons for going to Karlsruhe to attend the trial. He also protested against the activities of Herr Philipi, officer of the Karlsruhe Police and former Gestapo official, who on March 1st had prevented important defence documents from being handed to the defence attorneys. Dr. Wintrich, President of the Court, promised to investigate the matter.

After further evidence on the meaning of the phrase "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Marxist literature the trial was adjourned until March 8th.

March 8th: Trial Judge Dr Wintrich admitted at the opening of the session that the names and addresses of all spectators at the trial were being noted and handed over to the police. There was no evidence that this was being done in order to terrorise spectators, he claimed.

Prosecuting Attorney Dr Dix continued to read to the court sentences and paragraphs from Marxist literature, including quotations from documents of the Communist International, which was dissolved in 1943.

March 9th: Defence Attorney Professor Kroeger submitted the request that Judge Heiland, one of the judges trying the case, should be removed on grounds of prejudice, shown by his repeated shouting of anti-Soviet catch-phrases during the hearing. After a recess of three hours for consideration, the court decided that such applications could only be considered before the trial proper began. The application was thus refused.

March 10th: After hearing evidence from Walter Fisch and Josef Ledwohn, members of the Central Board of the KPD, the trial was recessed until March 16th.

The Question for All Germans

The East German Government proposed on March 2nd 1955 that all Germans in East and West should answer the following question in the course of a plebiscite which could be held under international control:

"Are you in favour of the peaceful reunification of Germany through free all-German elections in 1955, and in favour of the German Manifesto proclaimed in the Paulskirche, Frankfurt,

Or are you in favour of the Paris War Agreements?"

The German Manifesto was proclaimed on January 29th in the historic Paulskirche in Frankfurt by leading Social Democrats, such as Party Chairman Erich Ollenhauer; leading unionists like Georg Reuter, Deputy Chairman of the West German Trade Union Federation; and prominent churchmen such as Dr. Gustav Heinemann, Chairman of the German Evangelical Church Council.

Here is the full text of the German Manifesto:

On the basis of our earnest concern for the reunification of Germany we are convinced that the hour has now come to call solemnly upon the people and the Government to oppose decisively the growing tendency towards a final splitting of our nation.

The answer to the German fateful question of the hour — whether our nation should be reunited in peace and freedom, or whether it must live in the unnatural state of partitioning and progressive human 'growing apart' — depends today mainly upon the decision on the Paris Agreements.

The establishment of German armed forces in the Federal Republic and in the Soviet Zone must extinguish for an indefinite period the chances of reunification, and must increase the tension between east and west. Such measures would intensify to an unbearable degree the conflict of conscience of a great part of our people.

The frightful fate would be realised that brothers from one family would face each other in different armies with weapons in their hands.

At this hour every voice which is free to be raised must make itself heard in a great shout of warning.

Immeasurable responsibility would be borne by those who do not see the great danger that the ratification of the Paris Agreements would slam the door to Four Power negotiations on the restoration of the unity of Germany in freedom.

We appeal to the West German Federal Parliament and Federal Government to do everything possible to see to it that the Four Occupation Powers take account of the desire of our nation for unity.

Agreement on a Four Power agreement on reunification must take precedence over the formation of military blocs. The conditions can and must be found which are acceptable for Germany and her neighbours in order to secure, through the reunification of Germany, the peaceful coexistence of the nations of Europe.

The German people have a right to reunification!

WOMEN WHO COUNT

On March 8th, International Women's Day, the Government of the German Democratic Republic awarded the "Clara Zetkin Medal" to 44 women who have played an outstanding part in the fight for women's rights, for peace and for economic construction. The women decorated ranged from 80-year old veterans who helped to build the progressive women's movement under Kaiser Wilhelm, to young industrial workers who have proved the valuable part which women can play in modern industry. Here are short biographies of two of the women who received medals:

HELENE OVERLACH, ANTI-FASCIST VETERAN

Helene Overlach, a plump motherly woman of sixty, has devoted her life to the cause of a really decent democratic Germany.

The daughter of a doctor, she first took an active part in politics in 1918 in her early twenties, when, as soon as the Kaiser had been overthrown, she volunteered to do secretarial work in the office of the "Workers' and Soldiers' Council" established in Berlin.

Soon after, she joined the Young Communist League, and in 1921 she was arrested for the first time in Munich for distributing anti-militarist leaflets. Throughout the twenties she was extremely active in the progressive women's movement, and was elected in 1928 as member of the Reichstag, the parliament of the Weimar Republic. For the next five years her voice was always heard in any debate affecting the welfare and health of mothers and children.

After Hitler came to power in January 1933 she continued working and organising underground, but at the end of the year she was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to concentration camp. Here, under the most difficult circumstances, she organised lectures and courses for her fellow-prisoners-Communists, Social Democrats and women belonging to no party.

In 1938 she was released, but she plunged indomitably into the work to prevent the outbreak of a new war, and was soon arrested again and sent back to Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp. In 1944 she managed to escape when her name had already been entered on a "liquidation" list, and so survived the Hitlerite terror.

Immediately after the war she was back at work again, this time organising a trade school for girls in Berlin. In 1950 she was appointed as professor in the High School for Pedagogics. Today she lectures at the Berlin Institute for Trade School Teachers.

This month her career was crowned by the award of the Clara Zetkin Medal for "outstanding work in achieving equal rights for women".

* * *

ELSE SCHMIDT, PEASANT PIONEER

Else Schmidt, a pleasant-faced tall woman, of 43, took no interest in politics until a few years ago. Daughter of an agricultural worker, her new life began in 1946 when she received a small farm as the result of the post-war land reform.

At first life was extremely hard—she and her family had their little farm, but no farm instruments and no farm animals, and these were hard to come by in the difficult days following the war. But for the first time in her life Else Schmidt saw that there was a future, a chance for her children, and something worth working for.

Progress was slow, but by 1952, she had eight cows in her shed, she had fulfilled all her crop deliveries to the state, and the fields were producing fine crops.

Else Schmidt had seen, in the past years, how cooperation between the small peasants of the district in marketing, seed buying and so on was bringing good results. She felt that it must be possible to extend this cooperation to other fields, and when she read of the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, in which the fields were tilled in common, she decided that that was the solution she had been looking for. She was the driving spirit in getting together a group of five peasants, who formed such a cooperative, the first in the district.

But Else Schmidt had not just been working her little farm all this time. The very fact that a land reform had been carried out in 1945—46, and provided her with a farm of her own had made her interested in politics.

She joined the Democratic Women's Federation, and soon found herself chairman of the group in her village.

In 1950 the villagers elected her to represent them on the district council, and in 1952 she was elected to the county council. And in 1954 this hard-working peasant woman from the little village of Wulkow was elected to the People's Chamber, the East German Parliament.

But her political work has not stopped her working in the fields, and despite her other activities she fulfilled her full quota of work units last year in the agricultural production cooperative which she helped to found, and which has now grown strong and prosperous.

And what about her children? Her 22 year-old son is studying at Leipzig in the Trade School for Agricultural Machinery; her 17 year-old son is studying in Eisenach at the Agricultural Trade School. Her daughter Dorothea, who has just left school, is apprenticed in a Peasant Marketing Cooperative near home, and her youngest son, Juergen, is still at school.

On March 7th Else Schmidt was decorated with the Clara Zetkin Medal for "outstanding achievement in the peaceful economic development of the German Democratic Republic."

Women in the Lead

Figures issued in East Germany on International Women's Day showed that there are one woman minister, two women deputy ministers and four women state secretaries in the East German government.

20 women have been honoured with the title of "Hero of Labour", 192 women are "Honoured Activists" and over 50,700 are activists.

There are 44 women mayors of towns and 772 women mayors in rural areas.

Twenty-five per cent of representatives to the People's Chamber and in the district and local parliaments are women.

You Ask – We Answer:

"What's All This About the Saar?"

The Saar Territory, lying in the French-German frontier area south of Luxembourg, has an area of about 1000 square miles, about the same size as the county of Derbyshire in England or Rhode Island in the United States, and has a population of nearly one million.

The great importance of the Saar is the very rich coal mines situated there, with an annual production of about 15 million tons.

The Saar has in history always formed part of Germany, and the population is almost entirely German-speaking. In 1919, after the First World War, Article 45 of the Versailles Treaty laid down that the coal mines of the Saar should be handed over by Germany to France "as compensation for the destruction of the coal mines in Northern France and as a first instalment of reparations".

The Versailles Treaty also laid down that the Saar Territory should be administered for the next 15 years by the League of Nations. At the end of this period, a plebiscite was held in the Saar, and 91 per cent of the population voted for the territory to be reunited with Germany.

After the Second World War the Saar was attached for economic purposes to France, and made quite independent of Germany. By the Paris Agreements signed on October 23rd 1954 by West German Chancellor Adenauer, the Saar Territory would be definitely separated from Germany. The Franco-German Agreement on the Saar stated that the purpose of the treaty was to "give the Saar a European Statute within the framework of the Western European Union." Article 12 of the Agreement laid down specifically that nothing must be done to "endanger the Franco-Saar currency union" or to "involve the creation of a Customs frontier between France and the Saar". These clauses mean in effect that the Saar is under complete French control, despite various phrases about "Franco-German cooperation".

Progressive forces and parties in Germany have consistently opposed the splitting off of the Saar from Germany, and in the Saar itself the Communist Party is the only party which from the very first has publicly supported the Saar remaining in Germany.

The attitude of the German Democratic Republic to this problem was defined by East German Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl on March 2nd in an official statement to the People's Chamber. He stated:

"The Saar Agreement contradicts the main interests of the French and the German people—securing peace and the security of both countries—which can only be achieved through an understanding between France and Germany."

"The Saar Territory belongs to Germany. France has economic interests in the Saar. Between a united, democratic, peaceful and sovereign Germany and France, a peaceful and lasting understanding can be reached on the Saar question on the basis of the recognition of the fact that the Saar Territory is an integral part of Germany, and respect for France's interests with regard to security and in the economic field."

"The Saar Agreement concluded by the Adenauer Government cannot be of a lasting nature. Apart from the fact that Adenauer has no right to give his signature in a question which affects the whole of Germany, we believe that it is very questionable from the French point of view to conclude such a unilateral agreement with the Bonn militarists, since such an agreement contains the germ of a new attack on France by remilitarised West Germany."

Cooperation With Poland

The German Democratic Republic and Poland will cooperate still more closely in all fields in the future, as the result of talks held in Warsaw at the beginning of March by East German Foreign Minister Lothar Bolz and Polish leaders.

A communique on the talks, issued on March 6th, stated in part:

"Both parties are agreed that the reunification of Germany on a peaceful and democratic basis is in the interests of both the German and Polish peoples, and of all nations neighbouring on Germany. The solution of this problem cannot be reconciled with the ratification of the Paris Treaties, and in particular with the decision of the West German Parliament, which is a serious step towards the restoration of militarism in West Germany . . ."

Questions arising from the termination of the state of war between the Polish People's Republic and Germany were also dealt with.

Leipzig Fair - Big Success

Nearly ten thousand foreigners from 54 different countries visited the Leipzig Spring Fair, which closed on March 9th. 20,000 visitors and exhibitors came from West Germany.

The industries of the Germann Democratic Republic booked big export orders at the fair. Preliminary totals show that contracts were made for the export of products valued at 565 million rubles to "eastern" countries annd 301 million rubles to "western" countries.

NEW REICHSTAG FIRE?

Provocation in Hamburg

On March 7th two men were killed in an explosion in a cellar in Hamburg, West Germany. The police announced that an iron stove had exploded.

Two days later, on March 9th, big-business newspapers in Hamburg announced with big headlines that the dead men were "Communists who had been making bombs." On March 11th, Hamburg's Public Prosecutor Herr Feyen announced: "It is quite possible that this case will have an effect on the trial for the banning of the Communist Party at present in progress in Karlsruhe." (see details of this trial on page 44).

The "Hamburger Volkszeitung", Communist Party newspaper, commented on March 11th:

"It should be remembered that the enemies of the working class have always used provocations to start terrorist campaigns against the people. Bismarck arranged for an agent provocateur named Nobiling to shoot at Kaiser Wilhelm I (in 1878, ed), in order to obtain the banning of the Social Democratic Party. Hitler and Goering set fire to the Reichstag (in 1933, ed) for a similar purpose."

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Most readers probably know the old story about the man who went to a zoo for the first time. When he was shown the giraffe he commented "I don't believe it".

I was reminded of this story last week when I was visiting the Leipzig Fair. In the very nicely equipped Press Centre there I was sitting at a table with an American journalist, a leading official of the American High Commission in West Berlin, and the official's wife.

I asked the American woman what she thought of Leipzig. "Oh, the poor people here" she said. "I've been looking at the poor people in the street. They all look so thin and drawn, just like people in West Berlin used to look in 1947."

The remark was too much even for the American correspondent, who is by no means friendly to the German Democratic Republic, and he intervened: "Well, I've been looking at the people too, and they look quite healthy and rosy-cheeked to me."

"Oh that's just the cold that makes them look like that" said the American woman.

Blind?

Now what made this American woman see "thin and drawn" people in the Leipzig streets, although most of them looked normal to me, and to all other Fair visitors I spoke with?

The only explanation seems to be that she believes what she reads in the American press. She has read so much about "hunger and poverty behind the Iron Curtain" that when she sees everybody looking pretty normal she just does not believe it. I wonder what she would say if someone showed her a giraffe.

Incidentally, yesterday I asked my corner chemist in East Berlin what he was selling most of these days. "Cold cures, cough lozenges and slimming pills" he said.

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In the past we have commented several times on the "horror stories from East Germany" dished up by "refugees" arriving in West Berlin who want to make sure that they are accepted with open arms.

A particularly fine example turned up at the beginning of March. A man called Hans Kieslinger arrived in West Berlin as a refugee, and panted out an eye-popping story about how he had been the fireman on an East German train which had been involved in a frightful accident near Plauen, East Germany, in which at least 40 Soviet soldiers had been killed. He had fled to West Berlin to avoid being shot for his alleged responsibility for the accident, he explained.

The story was just what the West Berlin press was waiting for, and on March 4th all the West Berlin newspapers appeared with big headlines about this "train crash". News agencies carried the story abroad, and it appeared in papers all over the world.

The East German railway administration immediately declared officially that not only had there been no crash in the Plauen district, but there had not been a single fatality on the East German railways since the beginning of the year. Hans Kieslinger, it was revealed, had never been a fireman, and was a rather unsavoury subject who had changed jobs six times in the past twelve months and made a practice of pawning the family property to buy drink.

On March 9th the West Berlin police arrested Kieslinger, who they had discovered was wanted for theft in Wuerzburg and Wiesbaden in West Germany.

In this case the lie caught up with its inventor. But there are many hundreds or thousands of cases where the liar has been more careful, or is not so easy to pin down. It is a useful reminder of how careful you should be in assessing the horror stories you may hear dished up by "refugees from the East".

Nazi Governor

In the Notebook on January 7th this year I mentioned that one of the Christian Democratic Members of the West German Parliament, Dr. Hermann Conring, had been nazi Governor of the Dutch province of Groningen during the Second World War.

A Dutch reader has now supplied more particulars about this man. On one single day, May 3rd 1943, SS troops who had been called out by Dr. Conring to deal with a strike, murdered 18 Dutch patriots in the village of Marum, and lined up and shot five workers of the Beukema factory in Hoogeland.

After this action, Dr. Conring sat down and write a report to Seiss-Inquart, the nazi governor of occupied Holland stating:

"The police forces which we used fulfilled their duties in an exemplary fashion... 23 persons were shot dead and 13 were wounded."

After the war Dr. Conring was interned by the British occupation authorities for 18 months. He was elected to the West German Parliament in 1953, and was naturally one of the members who voted for the re-establishment of a Wehrmacht under Hitlerite officers. He is a member of the Parliamentary Budget Committee and Parliamentary Finance Committee.

Odd Letter

I have received an interesting letter from Mr. Ross Atwell, Representative of the Venango County CIO Council, Oil City, Pennsylvania, USA. Here is an extract:

"Your Democratic German Report is, in our opinion, simply a Communist propoganda (sic) sheet. Obviously, the CIO is unalterable (sic) opposed to everything you write or stand for."

Now I certainly do not expect all readers to agree to everything which they read in this paper, but Mr. Atwell's claim seems rather sweeping to me.

GERMAN REPORT writes and stands for, among other things:

No new Wehrmacht led by nazi generals in West Germany.
No restriction of the rights of trade unions and other working-class organisations in all parts of Germany.
Full equality for women workers throughout Germany — equal pay for equal work.
A peaceful reunification of Germany, and peaceful coexistence between East and West.

I should be very surprised if the Congress of Industrial Organisations in the United States is really "unalterably opposed" to these things. And I think the many CIO members who read and appreciate GERMAN REPORT will be equally surprised.

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